

Recovery

FY 2007 Initial Grantee Meeting

December 5 - 7, 2007 ~ San Diego, California



Gregory Thomas

National Center for Disaster Preparedness
Mailman School of Public Health
Columbia University

Joshua Kaufman, LCSW

School Mental Health Services
Los Angeles Unified School District, CA

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools
400 Maryland Avenue, SW / Washington, DC 20202

Overview of Session

- Identify key messages
- Define the Recovery phase
- Introduce four key components of Recovery:
 - Physical/structural recovery
 - Business recovery
 - Restoration of academic learning
 - Psychological/emotional recovery
- Discuss how to prepare for each component of Recovery
- Review key “Issues/Debates” in Recovery
- Discuss Recovery scenario



Key Messages

- The Recovery phase is designed to assist students, staff, and their families in the healing process and to restore educational operations in schools
- Success in the Recovery phase is based on pre-planning
- Strong community partnerships are critical
- Recovery involves four components:
 - Physical/structural recovery
 - Business recovery
 - Restoration of academic learning
 - Psychological/emotional recovery
- The Recovery phase is an ongoing process
- The type and breadth of Recovery activities needed will vary based on the size and scope of the crisis event



Phases of Emergency Management



What is the Recovery Phase?

- The Recovery phase is designed to assist students and staff in the healing process and to restore educational operations in schools:
 - Recovery can be a long-term process
 - Planning for Recovery begins in the Prevention-Mitigation and Preparedness phases
 - Providing for Recovery efforts requires leadership support
 - Recovery planning and efforts must take into account physical recovery, business recovery, academic recovery, and psychological/emotional health of students and staff

GOAL: Restore a safe and healthy learning environment



School/District Events That Require Recovery Planning and Efforts

- High
- ↑ Probability of Event
- Violence in schools or community (assaults, robberies, etc.)
 - Student and/or staff deaths
 - Suicides
 - Accidents (students hit by cars, bus accidents, car accidents, etc.)
 - Infectious disease outbreaks
 - Major natural disasters (tornado, earthquake, wildfire, hurricane, etc.)
 - School shootings
 - Terrorist events (i.e., 9/11)
- Low



Recovery: Four Key Components

- Physical/structural recovery
- Business recovery
- Restoration of academic learning
- Psychological/emotional recovery



What is Physical/Structural Recovery?

Purpose: To restore facilities necessary to enable educational operations

Key steps to take during Recovery phase:

- Ensure human safety at educational sites
- Assess physical/structural component
 - (e.g., damage assessment response team)
- Assess transportation and food services
- Determine availability of equipment and supplies (books)
- Debrief and incorporate lessons learned around physical assets and vulnerabilities into emergency management planning



How Can Schools Prepare for Physical Recovery Efforts in Advance?

- Recognize that steps taken in the Prevention-Mitigation phases can lesson the need for physical Recovery in some areas
- Be familiar with potential funding sources after disasters
- Be aware of what documentation would be needed to secure reimbursement for damage from major incidents
- Pre-determine strategies/policies for receiving donations following various types of incidents



How Can Schools Prepare for Physical Recovery Efforts in Advance?

- Consider the structures and departments that will be involved in physical recovery
- Coordinate with relevant district departments to discuss recovery plans
 - Safety and security, facility management, risk management, budget office, transportation, food services, technology services, etc.
- Create Damage Assessment Response Teams to conduct physical assessments following major events



What is Business/Fiscal Recovery?

Purpose: To restore critical business functions within the school/district as soon as possible

Key steps to take during Recovery phase:

- Implement the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and/or Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP):
 - BCP – Plans that identify systems needed to operate; and, incorporate mitigation efforts so that operations can be sustained following an emergency
 - COOP – COOP planning ensures that the capability exists to continue essential functions across a wide range of hazards.



What is Business/Fiscal Recovery?

Key steps to take during Business Recovery:

- Restore district administrative functions
- Ensure staff are supported
- Set-up automatic payment system
- Institute a system to register out of district students, and to register students in new schools

NOTE: The level of BCP activation will be determined by the scope and breadth of the emergency



How Can Schools Prepare for Business Recovery Efforts in Advance?

- Identify, in advance, who has responsibility for closing schools, or sending students/staff to alternate locations in the event of an emergency
- Identify who is responsible for restoring which business functions for schools/districts
- Identify succession plans for each major administrative function
- Ensure systems are in place for rapid contract execution of Business Continuity Plans (BCP) in the event of an emergency
- Practice activation of the BCP or COOP to test for gaps that need to be addressed in planning
- Consider options for continuing educational operations to minimize disruption to student learning



What is Academic Recovery?

Purpose: To facilitate students' return to learning; restore structure and routine

Key Steps to ensuring academic Recovery:

- Quick decision making regarding changes to school/academic routines
- Brief administrators and staff on situation(s)
- Communicate with parents/guardians on events and next steps



Why Is Academics Considered in the Recovery Phase?

- Youth exposed to repeated violence and trauma have been shown to have:
 - Lower grade point averages (Hurt et al., 2001)
 - Decreased reading ability (Delaney-Black et al., 2003)*
 - More reported absences from school (Hurt et al., 2001)
 - Increased expulsions and suspensions (LAUSD survey)
 - Decreased rates of high school graduation (Grogger, 1997)
- Restoring, or maintaining, a routine is helpful for students throughout the Recovery process



*Source: Delaney-Black, V., Covington, C., Ondersma, S.J., Nordstrom-Klee, B., Templin, T., Ager, J., Janisse, J., & Sokol, R.J. (2002). Violence exposure, trauma, and IQ and/or reading deficits among urban children. Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, 156 (3), 280-285.



How Can Schools Prepare for Academic Recovery Efforts in Advance?

- Determine, in advance, who has the ability to decide when schools will close and when they will resume following closure (linked to Business Recovery)
 - In most cases, this decision will be made at the local level with input from appropriate State representatives
 - Key questions to be considered include:
 - Can the school remain open safely?
 - Can the school routine be maintained? Modified?
 - Are academic materials needed/available if school closes?
 - Decisions about length of closure will vary depending on the scope of the incident



What is Psychological/ Emotional Recovery?

Purpose: To promote coping and resiliency for students, staff, and their families following an emergency or crisis

Key Steps to promoting Psychological/Emotional Recovery:

- Recognize that the type and breadth of an incident impacts Psychological/Emotional Recovery
- Consider needs and services available for both short- and long-term Psychological/Emotional Recovery
- Work with internal and external partners who can support Psychological/Emotional Recovery and provide needed services



Why is Psychological/Emotional Recovery Important in the Short-Term and Long-Term?

- Traumatic stress is an acute distress response that is experienced after exposure to a catastrophic event
- Traumatic stress occurs because the event poses a serious threat to:
 - The individual's life or physical integrity
 - The life of a family member or close friend
 - One's surrounding environment
- Individuals who have witnessed injury or death are also at risk to develop a trauma stress response
- There will be a small percentage of those impacted by serious crisis events who will have longer term reactions



How Can Schools Support Psychological/Emotional Recovery in the Short-Term?

- Identify circles of impact and provide triage:
 - Triage is the process of identifying the immediate needs of students and staff, and ensuring referral to appropriate services
 - Provide psychoeducation for families, students, and staff
- Consider psychological first aid
- Consider utilization of services for staff through district Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)
- Leverage union resources available for teacher support
- Be aware of impacts of possible trauma history



How Can Schools Support Psychological/Emotional Recovery in the Long-Term?

- Promote coping and resiliency for students and staff and to assist with the healing process
- Make individual and group crisis counseling available during the first week after a crisis event
- Offer Intervention strategies and models as needed:
 - Trauma and grief focused school-based mental health programs
 - Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools (CBITS)
 - Short-term individual, group, and family interventions



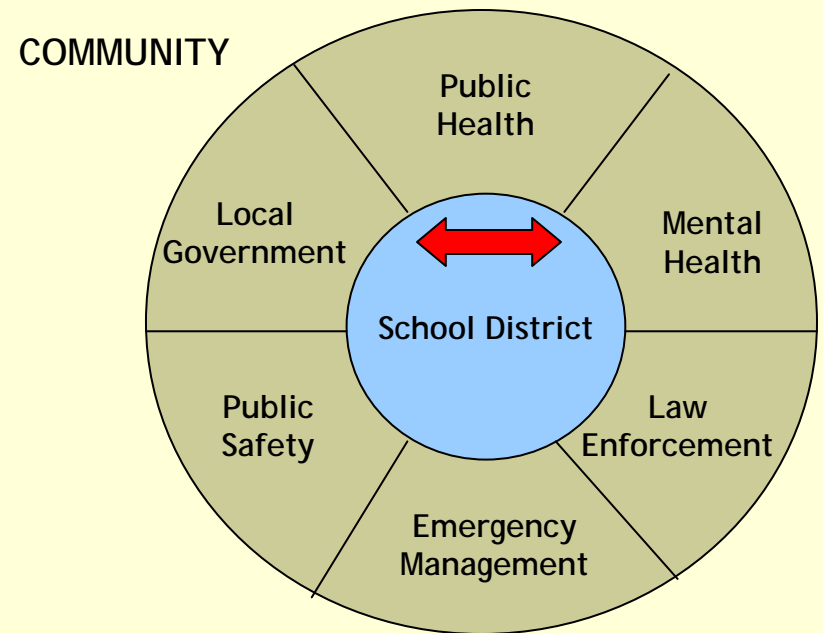
How Can Schools Support Psychological/Emotional Recovery in the Long-Term?

- Conduct ongoing assessment/monitoring of mental health of students and staff
- Monitor attendance, grades, and counselor's visits
- Provide care for caregivers (compassion fatigue)
- Incorporate lessons learned from each event into future planning efforts
- Remember to reinforce ongoing prevention programs
- Be aware of 'key dates,' such as trials, anniversaries, and holidays
- Incorporate prevention programming into district programs



How Can Schools Prepare for Psychological/Emotional Recovery in Advance?

- Identify both internal and external partners
 - Consider local mental health agencies who may be able to assist
 - Develop a structure for support
 - Be aware of issues around “outside” vs. “inside” help



How Can Schools Prepare for Psychological/Emotional Recovery in Advance?

- Before an event occurs, schools should:
 - Consider expertise for providing mental health services at the:
 - School level
 - District level
 - Community level
 - Outline partnership agreements with relevant local partners
 - Identify a school/district employee to coordinate partnerships with the community—a liaison officer
 - Develop a process for screening and registering volunteers
 - Assemble and Train Crisis Recovery Teams:
 - District teams
 - School-based teams



How Can Schools Prepare for Psychological/Emotional Recovery in Advance?

- Develop template letters (that can be tailored) for alerting parents, families, guardians, students, and staff to emergencies
- Pre-determine strategies for accepting contributions/donations following a death/incident
- Outline strategies for dealing with “empty chairs”
- Consider a district policy for memorials (be consistent across events)
- Ensure a process is in place for parental consent for receipt of mental health services should they be needed



How Can Schools Prepare for Psychological/ Emotional Recovery in Advance?

- To ensure that schools are prepared to deal with the Psychological/ Emotional Component of Recovery, schools should proactively:
 - Identify and train appropriate staff to provide developmentally and culturally appropriate mental health services
 - Train mental health staff on specific interventions
 - Provide basic training on available resources and common reactions to trauma for all staff (including administrators)
 - Provide specific information to all staff regarding the school's referral system (e.g., inform teachers about who students can go to for support, and the referral systems available)
 - Train teachers/staff on early warning signs and on how to work with parents/guardians



Key Issues for the Recovery Phase

Issue #1: Opening or closing schools after a traumatic event

- Policy options should be considered and outlined in advance
- Considerations:
 - How long should the school be closed?
 - How can parents/guardians weigh in on decisions about school closures?
 - Who has the ultimate decision-making power regarding school closure?
 - How will the community be notified?
 - Ultimate question—Will the children be better off in school, or out of school?



Key Issues for the Recovery Phase

Issue #2: Memorials after a student or staff death

- Policies should be considered and outlined in advance
- Considerations:
 - Memorials can be controversial
 - Questions may arise about how/if policies should vary depending on the type of death
 - Memorials in schools should not add to the suicide “contagion effect”
 - A date for removing memorial items
 - How memorials might reinforce ongoing prevention programming (i.e., scholarship funds, etc.)



Key Issues for the Recovery Phase

Issue #3: How to handle key dates

- Policies should be considered and outlined in advance
- Considerations:
 - Be cognizant of anniversary dates but do not dramatize them
 - Watch for reactions around holidays, anniversaries, and/or trial dates
 - Prepare a constructive message for anniversaries
 - Make sure educators watch for risk behaviors



Interactive Scenario



Scenario

- You are a member of the emergency management team at YOUR school.
- It's early morning.
- School has just begun for the day.
- One school bus is late arriving due to ice on the roads.



Details of the Incident

- The bus has 26 students from the middle and high schools on board (ages 10 - 17).
- As the bus arrives, the driver is unable to stop the bus. The bus skids and then crashes through the wall of the music room. There are 25 students in the music room.
- Two students are killed and 19 students are injured—four of them severely.
- The bus driver was found to be intoxicated.



What are the first three steps you would take as an emergency management team member?



Which students and staff are most in need of crisis counseling?



What types of services would facilitate the Recovery process in the primary four components of Recovery?

- Physical/structural recovery?
- Business recovery?
- Restoration of academic learning?
- Psychological/emotional recovery?



Summary

- Successful Recovery from crisis events is based on the planning conducted in advance of an incident.
- Schools need to plan for the physical/structural, business, academic, and psychological/emotional Recovery needs of the school facilities, students and staff.
- The types and breadth of Recovery activities needed will vary based on the size and scope of the crisis event.
- Successful Recovery efforts are contingent on strong community partnerships, development of policies and procedures, and training of staff.



THANK YOU!!!

For More Information Contact:

Gregory Thomas: gathomas422@aol.com
Joshua Kaufman: joshua.kaufman@lausd.net

REMS TA Center: 1-866-540-7367 (REMS)
info@remstacenter.org

